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In Opposition of ADCCLA's Proposed Alpha-BID

Dave Koga <kogamon@mac.com>

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To: mike.feuer@lacity.org

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Dear Mr. Feuer,

My name is Dave Koga and I am writing to express my opposition to the above referenced application for a LSPM PBID (also known as an Alpha BID). I am a property owner and resident at the Barker Block project in the Arts District, and my property is located within the proposed territory of this LSPM PBID.

The general concerns from our community and my specific concerns are:

1) ADCCLA has refused to follow the City of LA's Instruction to form a BID.

a. ADCCLA has not followed the City of LA's requested procedures. Your office, as well as the office of the City Clerk, has not approved their management plan, engineer's report, or form of their petition. To date, the office of the City Clerk has not authorized them to enter into the petition phase. Despite this, they have begun sending petitions out for signature. Even more troubling, it appears that they haphazardly mailed petitions to only select individuals; some neighbors of mine received them, but others did not. I feel this disregard for the rules is a bad way to start a relationship with both the Community and the City. Their actions reek of impropriety.

2) The request for an Alpha BID "special economic zone" per division 6 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, chapter 9, section 6.601, is far reaching.

a. Special economic zones for Alpha BIDs are for area designated as LANI, TNI, TOD or commercial/ industrial zones with poverty levels at 20% or higher.
b. Designation of this Alpha BID as a TOD (Transportation Oriented Districts) is far reaching. The Little Tokyo TOD as the name suggest is most aligned with Little Tokyo AND this ADCCLA Alpha BID barely touches this TOD node at the station.
c. Of the 39 BIDs in LA there are 7 Alpha BIDs and exactly zero (0) currently a result of being in a TOD zone.

3) The boundary lines of this group do not fit "best practice" for designation of services offered and services received.

a. Putting boundaries down the middle of a street or selectively choosing adds confusion to the community who is in the BID and will most likely add work for the basic city services provided to that area and for the BID organization. Drawing a line down the middle of the street is like reactive parental guidance for bad children.
b. Best practices of aligning the boundaries for clear designation of services for the BID and City services. It's what works!
c. Oddly, yesterday at a community meeting the ADCCLA group explicitly admitted to gerrymandering of the votes and boundaries.

4) Excluding large Government owned properties is selective designation not supporting the entire community. It feels like steering.

a. Each and every property owner and type of property are what make up a BID community and should be represented.

5) A 10 year term is excessive for a BID or any organization in a rapidly evolving community such as ours.

a. Although it is allowed by the statute, there is no requirement that this Alpha BID be established for the full length. Because of the rapidly evolving nature of both the Arts District and Downtown generally, a shorter term should be required in order to ensure that whatever BID is established is in line with the area's needs.

As you can see, there are numerous problems with this current proposal. However, I believe that there is a common theme to these issues: gamesmanship and a lack of respect for established rules. From the refusal to follow the City's procedures for forming a BID, to the selection of an obscure BID format, to the gerrymandering of the district's boundaries to exclude various properties, it is clear that this proposal is not about providing the special benefits that BIDs are intended to offer for the majority of the district.

Our community lost our previous BID because a man called Yuval Bar-Zemer, who has publicly stated that he is against the very concept of BIDs, and his companies brought a lawsuit against it. And yet, he is now the driving force behind the ADCCLA and its Alpha BID proposal. I believe that these issues, as well as Mr. Bar-Zemer's personal history in the Arts District, demonstrate that this proposal is not designed to serve the whole community of the Arts District, but rather advance his personal and financial interests on the backs of the other property owners, such as myself. His jockeying and ever changing positioning frankly scares me.

Please understand that this letter is not in opposition to the formation of an appropriate BID in the Arts District. I believe that they bring immense benefits to areas such as the Arts District, with increased safety and cleanliness programs that target and respond to community needs in a complementary way to the City's own efforts.

I also am a strong supporter of the other claimed goals of ADCCLA's Alpha BID such as cityscape beautification, public arts, community gardens, green roofs and increased parkland and public space. However, I do not believe that this proposed Alpha BID would create those benefits in a way that benefits the whole Arts District, or even that a Business Improvement District is the appropriate vehicle for such projects, rather than the many other community-based nonprofits that are already active in bringing such things to the Arts District.

For these reasons, I urge the City to not allow this Alpha BID to be created by ADCCLA. I urge the City to instead continue its support of the PBID of Arts District LA, which has already been approved by your Office.

I have copied numerous stakeholders within the City of LA that I feel should know of our concerns and I hope and trust they have the same support, ideology and position for the community as a whole not a special interest group.

Sincerely,

Dave Koga

